

Message Text

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71

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 041115Z SEP 73 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2851

INFO CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 9307

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PINT, CB

SUBJ: IN TAM ON FANK MANPOWER PROBLEM

DEPT PASS SECDEF FOR ACTION AND CJCS FOR INFO

REF: PHNOM PEN 9305/R 041110Z SEP 73

1. ENDERS CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER IN TAM
SEPTEMBER 3 TO FOLLOW UP ON GENERAL VOGT'S REMARKS
THAT MORNING TO THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL ON THE
CRITICAL ROLE OF MANPOWER IN THE COMING DRY SEASON.
WE REITERATED THAT WHICHEVER SIDE WAS MOST SUCCESSFUL
IN RECRUITING IN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS WOULD WIN THE
STRUGGLE NEXT YEAR.

2. IN TAM REPLIED THAT HE HAD BEEN GIVING SOME
THOUGHT TO THIS QUESTION ALSO, AND HAD DISCUSSED IT
THAT AFTERNOON WITH 7TH DIVISION COMMANDER BRIGGEN
UN KAUV. IN TAM SAID HE THOUGH HE COULD RECRUIT
"PERHAPS 10,000" TERRITORIALS FOR SERVICE AT VARIOUS
POINTS AROUND PHNOM PENH, WHICH WOULD THEN PERMIT
DIVISION COMMANDERS LIKE KAUV TO RECRUIT FOR THE
GENERAL RESERVE AMONG EXISTING REGIONAL FORCES. IN
SECRET

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TAM ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE
ASSURANCES THAT HIS RECRUITS WOULD REALLY RETURN TO
THE POINT OF RECRUITMENT AFTER BASIC TRAINING IN ONE
OF THE FANK'S CENTERS.

3. WE REPLIED THAT RECRUITMENT OF TERRITORIALS WAS NEVER ANY PROBLEM; LON NOL HAD RAISED 30 TO 40 THOUSAND IN A FEW MONTHS LAST SUMMER. IN MOST CASES ALL YTA WERE DOING WAS OFFERING A SALARY TO A MAN TO DEFEND HIS HOME VILLAGE. YOU HAVE TO HAVE TERRITORIALS, BUT YOU CAN'T WIN ANY BATTLES WITH THEM. WE ASKED IN TAM WHETHER HE WOULDN'T CONSIDER RECRUITING DIRECTLY INTO THE GENERAL RESERVE.

4. IN A RAMBLING REPLY, IN TAM REHEARSED HIS VARIOUS COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE ARMY AND AGAINST SOSTHENE. HE FINISHED BY SAYING THAT HE HAD BEEN TOYING WITH THE IDEA (AS HE TOLD ME WHEN I PAID MY FAREWELL CALL ON HIM) OF LOWERING THE MINIMUM CONSCRIPTION AGE FROM 31, AND COULD PERHAPS NOW GO AHEAD WITH THAT CONCEPTION.

5. WE AGREED THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL, SINCE MANIFESTLY MEN IN THE 31 AND 35 AGE BRACKET WERE POOR PROSPECTS FOR MILITARY SERVICE. BUT WE SAID THAT IT WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH, BECAUSE CAMBODIA'S WEAK ADMINISTRATORS WOULD SEIZE EVERY PRETEXT TO AVOID DOING THEIR DUTY UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT WAS PRESSING THEM CONTINUOUSLY. MERE ADJUSTMENTS IN THE REGULATIONS WON'T WORK UNLESS THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE WHOLE GOVERNMENT WERE TO GET STRONGLY BEHIND A RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING ELEMENTS OF BOTH CONSCRIPTION AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE. WE SAID THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW ONE COULD EXPECT TO REMAIN HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AND NOT COME TO GRIPS WITH THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM THE COUNTRY FACES THIS FALL.

6. IN TAM SAID THAT HE WOULD THINK IT OVER, AND MIGHT USE THE OCCASION OF THE CABINET MEETING SEPTEMBER 4 TO DISCUSS OUR SUGGESTIONS WITH HIS COLLEAGUES.

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7. COMMENT: DESPITE EARLIER REPORTS THAT HE IS WORKING ON A NEW LETTER OF RESIGNATION, IN TAM APPEARED VERY MUCH ENGAGED IN HIS PRESENT JOB. WE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THAT APPARENT COMMITMENT TO PRESS HIM AS HARD AS WE COULD ON THE CAPITAL ISSUE OF MANPOWER.

8. SIRIK MATAK TELLS US TODAY THAT IN TAM DID IN FACT USE A HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL MEETING TODAY TO PROPOSE REDUCING THE MINIMUM CONSCRIPTION AGE TO 25. (THE COUNCIL READILY AGREED) AND ORGANIZING A SPECIAL CABINET COMMITTEE WHICH HE WOULD HEAD TO RUN THE RECRUITMENT EFFORT.

9. THIS IS MOVEMENT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, BUT IT
REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER IN TAM IS MERELY GOING
THROUGH THE MOTIONS, OR HAS REALLY UNDERSTOOD THE
ISSUE, PARTICULARLY THE NEED FOR MORE INTERVENTION
TROOPS.

SWANK

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF NOR CJCS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY TRAINING, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 SEP 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PHNOM09307
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750011-1921
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730963/abqcegos.tel
Line Count: 119
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: PHNOM PEN 9305/R 041110Z SEP 73
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19-Nov-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <27-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: IN TAM ON FANK MANPOWER PROBLEM
TAGS: MARR, PINT, CB
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COMUSSAG
BANGKOK
SAIGON
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005